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Captain Harmanpreet at the squad announcement in Mumbai on Saturday | PTI

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WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP: HARMAN & CO. AIM FOR GLOBAL GLORY

After the home triumph at ODI World Cup, India look to create a dynasty in the shortest format at the event to be held in England this Summer

AMANJOT, KASHVEE INJURIES BIG ISSUES

The biggest concern remains the injury blows to all-rounders Amanjot Kaur and Kashvee Gautam. Amanjot, crucial to India's ODI 50-over WC win, is down with a back injury, while Gautam is expected to undergo knee surgery. In their absence, the all-rounder balance is a concern, and the selectors have tried to cover it up with Radha Yadav's experience

CALL UP FOR NANDNI, COMEBACK FOR YASTIKA

- Chandigarh seamer Nandni Sharma, who had a stellar WPL season with Delhi Capitals, has earned a maiden international call
- Yastika Bhatia, who missed the ODI WC, has made a comeback as back-up keeper. England held the inaugural in 2009. In that event, India had reached the last four stage of the tournament | P15

2020

THEIR BEST FINISH CAME IN 2020 WHEN THEY REACHED THE FINAL

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Rare full Falta repoll fiat

Major ECI crackdown after reports of violence following threats by TMC goons to voters

SUBHENDU MAITI @ Kolkata

IN an extraordinary move, the Election Commission (EC) late on Saturday ordered 'fresh' re-polling in all 285 polling stations of the Falta assembly seat in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on May 21 due to "subversion of democratic process" and "severe electoral offences". Re-election in an entire assembly seat has not been ordered in the recent past.

The fresh poll will take place on Thursday, May 21 and the counting of votes will happen on Sunday, May 24.

The Commission invoked its constitutional powers under Article 324 to annul the earlier polling on April 29, citing "serious irregularities" that compromised the integrity of the electoral process in a large number of booths.

Earlier in the day, Falta was in the thick of things as it recorded tense moments leading to protests from a large section of voters who staged a gherao for over seven hours, alleging they were receiving life threats from TMC workers in the area.

Considering the situation in Falta, the ECI directed registering of FIRs against Israfil Chowkidar, gram panchayat pradhan at Hasimnagar and an associate of Jahangir Khan, Trinamool candidate from Falta, and another TMC worker Sujauddin Sheikh, to restore confidence among voters. Jahangir is a close lieutenant of Abhishek Banerjee, TMC national general secretary and Diamond Harbour MP.

The protesters, many of them women and holding BJP flags, blocked the road in Hasimnagar village. "TMC's Israfil Chowkidar has threatened us that if these people win, they will burn our houses and indulge in bloodshed," they claimed.

The CRPF deputy commandant assured the demonstrators of ensuring their safety. Khan dismissed the allegations and said the women were "deployed" by the BJP. "If the charges are proved, I am ready to face the law," he said.

On Friday, the EC had ordered re-election in 15 polling stations of two Assembly seats in West Bengal — Diamond Harbour and Magarhat Paschim. P10

POLL WALL

Re-poll: 87% voter turnout

Repolling in 15 booths of two assembly constituencies in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district concluded at 6 pm on Saturday. A turnout of 86.90% was recorded till 5 pm, with the figure from one booth still awaited.

Mamata bullish of good show

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Saturday told counting agents of the party that it will secure over 200 of the 294 assembly seats.

Locals stage a protest in Falta on Saturday after being allegedly threatened and assaulted by a TMC leader | PTI

NO SC ORDER ON TMC APPEAL OVER COUNTING

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

A special bench of the Supreme Court on Saturday refused to pass any order on a Trinamool Congress plea challenging the decision of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to appoint only Central government employees and PSU staff as counting day supervisors in West Bengal.

A two-judge bench of justices P S Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi observed that the ECI has the liberty to choose the counting personnel it wants to deploy. Besides, the ECI's April 13 circular provides for deployment of state government employees as well, so it cannot be said to be incorrect, the court reasoned. For its part, the ECI assured that the state's nominee will be present during counting.

"No further orders are necessary in this case except to record the statement of Dama Seshadri Naidu that the Election Commission will implement the circular dated 13th April, 2026 in true letter and spirit," the bench said.

Iran didn't want war, it was forced on us: Top cleric

BALA CHAUHAN @Bengaluru

MORE than 60 days into the war that has destabilised the global economy and sent oil prices spiralling out of control, there are no signs of the Iran war ending soon. While there is no decisive military or diplomatic win for the United States or Israel even after two months, for Iran it is a war they never wanted. "Iran never wanted war, it was forced on us. We don't want it still, but if the enemies persist then Iran is ready to sustain the war even if it goes up to 10 years," Dr Abdul Majeed Hakim Ilahi, representative of the Supreme Leader of Iran, told *The New Sunday Express*. He was in the city to attend the prayer meeting of the former Supreme Leader, late Ayatollah Khamenei.

"They (US and Israel) thought the war would end in three days; Iran will buckle and they will split it into five countries. That did not happen, nor will it ever happen in the future. Iranians will shed their blood but not give an inch of their land away. The enemies spoke about regime change, little realising that Iran has a Constitution and they can't change it. The US claims that it has bombed all our nuclear sites, yet President Trump accuses us of having nuclear weapons! We are signatories to the NPT and have the right to develop peaceful nuclear technology for electricity and medicine under the NPT," he added.

Dr Ilahi said the war that the US and Israel launched on February 28 was to "cover up individual issues (of US President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu)." P5

PICU KEVIN NASHON
Dr Abdul Majeed Hakim Ilahi speaks to TNSE in Bengaluru on Saturday

Army launches sovereign swarm capability push

JAVARIA RANA @ New Delhi

THE Indian Army is looking to build its own sovereign swarm warfare capability and has begun search for a joint development partner to develop an indigenous swarm algorithm that could eventually provide it with a unified command and control framework for networked drone operations.

Top sources told this paper that the Army has invited bids for the project and will hold a pre-bid meeting in the second week of May. "This is far bigger than simply acquiring another swarm capability," a source said. "What the Army is trying to do is build a common architecture of its own, so swarm operations are no longer tied to individual vendors or proprietary systems." The project comes at a time when contemporary conflicts have underscored the operational value of networked drone swarms across surveillance, logistics, payload delivery and adaptive combat roles.

The project is structured in two phases over six months, beginning with an initial two-month stage focused on developing an indigenous ground control station and software integration framework.

"The focus is on creating a secure common control layer over existing drone assets, with fully offline capability built in from the outset," the source said. The second phase, spanning four months, expands the model from centralised control to decentralised swarm autonomy, with onboard computing, indigenous software stacks and greater battlefield resilience. "The objective is to test whether these prototypes can continue functioning in tougher, more realistic operational conditions, rather than only in controlled environments," the source said.

It will test adaptive formations, task reassignment, collision avoidance and the swarm's ability to sustain operations even when communications are disrupted, drones are lost or navigation systems come under strain.

Indigenous control

The stress on indigenous control comes amid persistent security concerns over Chinese components in drone systems after past vulnerability scares triggered tighter scrutiny of military drone supply chains

K'taka, Goa at loggerheads over control of islands

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @Karwar

KARNATAKA and Goa could be headed for a stiff standoff over the ownership and development of islands, which were surveyed and named by the Uttara Kannada district administration with the intent of promoting them for tourism.

Karnataka surveyed these revenue islands near Karwar and Bhatkal recently. But in a counter-move, Goa announced this week that it would conduct its own survey of islands till Bhatkal. With Karnataka in no mood to relent, district in-charge minister Mankal Vaidya declared that the state would not cede an inch of land to Goa.

After a report appeared in *The New Indian Express* that Karnataka was planning to develop these remote, uninhabited and unnamed islands, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant asserted that he would not allow Karnataka to take up projects on these islands. P6

EXPRESS READ

Indefinite transport stir from May 20

Bengaluru: The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation on Saturday declared an indefinite strike from May 20 if the state government fails to fulfil their demands of pay hike and release of salary arrears | P4

IPL FINAL

Bengaluru's turn but BCCI yet to finalise venue

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

IN March 2026, Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) had said that Bengaluru would host the final and a playoff match of this year's edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL). However, with the schedule for the play-off and final yet to be announced, Devajit Saikia, board secretary, refused to confirm whether Bengaluru will retain the right to host the final as defending champions. "We are working on which can be the appropriate venue for the IPL playoff and the final," he told reporters on the sidelines of the Indian squad announcement for the women's T20 World Cup. "You keep on guessing, but I am not going to give a reply. We are taking a call in two days."

Usually, the defending champions host the final and a playoff game. That practice, however, was not followed in 2025 when the final was moved from Kolkata to Ahmedabad (the BCCI had cited the threat of rain) and the Royal Challengers Bengaluru won the title. It remains to be seen whether the board allots one of the year's marquee clashes to Ahmedabad this year as well.

Action against RR

Meanwhile, days after Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag was fined 25 per cent of his match fee for vaping in the dressing room, Saikia confirmed that the board is exploring options to take stringent action against the franchise. "We are exploring some other options on how to rein in the teams which are violating the norms," he said. "We will be taking some action. We are looking at the various terms and conditions and protocols of IPL on how the teams should behave. It is not only the players or the officials. As a team, they have to maintain certain decorum so that the image of IPL is never adversely affected. To ensure that, we have to take a call and we will be taking some action."

We are working on which can be the appropriate venue for the IPL playoff and the final. We are taking a call in two days

Devajit Saikia, BCCI secretary

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Houselisting and Housing Census
From April 16th
to May 15th, 2026
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What will you be asked ?
Information related to house
House number
Main materials of Floor, Wall and Roof
Use of the House (Residential/Non-residential)
Condition of house
Basic information about family
Number of family members
Name of the head of the family
Home ownership
Number of rooms
Basic Features
Source of Drinking Water
Electricity/light facility
Availability and type of toilets
Bathroom facilities
Kitchen and gas connection
Cooking fuel
Household Amenities
Radio/Television
Internet/computer
Mobile phone
Two-wheeler/four-wheeler
This stage lays the foundation for Population Enumeration to be conducted in February 2027
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